

ELECTION COMMISSION OF BHUTAN

BHUTAN VOTER GUIDE

Monday, August 21, 2006



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ELECTION COMMISSION OF BHUTAN
(Ensuring Free, Fair and Democratic Elections and Referendums)



FOREWORD

D a t e d :

Dear Voters,

As the Nation prepares to usher in historic changes in its system of governance, the Election Commission of Bhutan is happy to publish this ,B h u t a n V o t e r G u i d e .

We hope everyone will find the Guide informative and helpful in understanding the subject of elections and in becoming responsible voters.

His Majesty the King has bequeathed to every Bhutanese the sacred right to vote. Therefore, I urge every citizen to take part in the historic Democratic Process.

Sincerely Yours,

Kunzang Wangdi
CHIEF ELECTION COMMISSIONER

ELECTION COMMISSION OF BHUTAN

Introduction

His Majesty the King of Bhutan, Jigme Singye Wangchuck's vision is to have the Bhutanese people share the sovereign right to freely choose and develop their own social, economic and political systems. The destiny of the nation and the authority to govern shall be based on the will of the people of Bhutan expressed through periodic, free and fair elections.

The Constitution of the Kingdom of Bhutan confers on the Bhutanese people the inherent and inalienable right to elect a government of their choice with equal opportunity to contest in an election and to put forward their political views, individually or in association with others.

For a democracy to function well, every voter must be educated and well informed in every aspect of elections, in particular, the voting process and electoral enrollment. An effective democratic system of a representative government requires meaningful participation by all citizens.

In order that every Bhutanese is prepared to play a meaningful role in the Parliamentary and Local Government elections as enshrined in the Constitution, the Election Commission of Bhutan has the honour of bringing out this Bhutan Voter Guide.

We hope this Guide will help the Bhutanese voters understand better the importance of exercising their right and duty to vote in elections while keeping in mind the implications of failing to participate in the electoral process.

ELECTION COMMISSION OF BHUTAN

1. What is the Election Commission of Bhutan?

The Election Commission of Bhutan is an independent constitutional office. It was established to supervise, direct and control elections in Bhutan. The Commission consists of the Chief Election Commissioner and two Election Commissioners.

There is also the Delimitation Commission which has all Election Commissioners, the Surveyor General and two Secretaries of the Ministries responsible for Local Government, Census, Civil Registration, and the Urban and Municipal Affairs as members. It is responsible to decide on the number of constituencies and draw and review the electoral boundaries for the purposes of elections.

2. When was it established?

The Election Commission was established on 31st December 2005 by Royal Decree. The Office of the Commission was formally inaugurated on 16th January 2006 by the Hon ble Chief Justice, the Chairman of the Constitution Drafting Committee of Bhutan.

3. Why was it established?

In the year 2008, Bhutan will be a Democratic Constitutional Monarchy. Government and all public office holders will be chosen by the people through elections. So it is important that elections are conducted by an office which is independent of control of any ministry, authority or political groups in a free and fair manner. For these reasons, the Election Commission of Bhutan was established.

4. What are its main functions?

The main function of the Election Commission is to hold peaceful, fair and free Parliamentary and Local Government elections and National Referendums that would bring in a stable and vibrant democracy for Bhutan. It is responsible to set up an election system that would allow Bhutanese to elect good people to Parliament, and have competent and qualified Council of Ministers to provide good

governance and meet the aspirations of the people in terms of development, well-being and prosperity.

5. What are its responsibilities?

Its responsibilities are to ensure that there is a sound voter education programme and voters are enlightened to know that it is their fundamental right of franchise and how valuable is this right.

Secondly, the Election Commission is to ensure that every eligible Bhutanese national who should be on the Voters List is not missed out. And any wrong person who should not be in the voters list is not included on it.

Thirdly, it has to ensure there is absolute level playing field. All political parties and candidates must be treated alike. They should be given equal opportunity of campaigning or carrying out their manifesto and their statement of promises which they wish to achieve if elected by the people.

Fourthly, it has to ensure there is absolute peace on the polling day, which should be free and fair.

Fifthly, an important task of the Election Commission is to ensure that the poll personnel, who man the polling station, act in a neutral, absolutely objective and fair manner, without any political prejudice or bias.

6. How does it function?

The Election Commission functions in accordance with the Election Act of the Kingdom of Bhutan 2006.

The Commission makes policies and decisions related to elections. It has a Secretariat to carry out its decisions and plans. Dzongkhag Electoral Officers assisted by Electoral Registration Officers and Delimitation Clerks are responsible for election activities in the Dzongkhags.

At the time of elections, many public officials will be deputed on special duty with the Election Commission as Returning Officers, Presiding Officers, Polling Officers and Counting Supervisors.

7. How does it ensure free and fair elections and referendums?

The Election Commission ensures free and fair elections and referendums through the following mechanisms:

a) Acts, Rules, Regulations and Guidelines

The following Acts, Rules, Regulations and Guidelines lay down the time and manner of holding elections by the Election Commission:

Acts	
1.	Election Bill of the Kingdom of Bhutan, 2006
2.	Public Election Fund Bill
3.	National Referendum Bill of the Kingdom of Bhutan, 2006
Rules and Regulations	
4.	Delimitation of Electoral Constituencies Rules and Regulations of the Kingdom of Bhutan, 2006
5.	Electronic Voting Machine (EVM) Rules and Regulations of the Kingdom of Bhutan, 2006
6.	Media Coverage of Elections Rules and Regulations of the Kingdom of Bhutan, 2006
7.	Formation of Political Parties and Conduct Rules of the Kingdom of Bhutan, 2006
8.	Election Security Rules and Regulations of the Kingdom of Bhutan
9.	Postal Ballots Rules and Regulations of the Kingdom of Bhutan 2006
10.	Election Symbols Rules and Regulations of the Kingdom of Bhutan, 2006
Guidelines	
11.	Guidelines for Electoral Roll Preparation and Voter Registration of the Kingdom of Bhutan,

	2006
12.	Guidelines for Appointment of National and International Observers of the Kingdom of Bhutan, 2006
Other Documents	
13.	Hand book for Electoral Officers

These regulate and guide the Commission in functioning with integrity and fairness at all times.

b) State Funded Election Campaigns

Parliamentary election campaigns will be funded by the Election Commission. This is to help qualified and credible voters to stand as candidates in elections and to free political parties and candidates from the influence of corruption and money power.

c) Electronic Voting Machine (EVM)

EVM will be used for polling. It is voter friendly and also makes both the voting and the counting efficient and fair. It ensures secrecy of the vote cast and thus the results will not be tampered with.

d) Appointment of National Observers

Senior level officers known for their integrity will be appointed as Observers during the elections. They will have the right to check and report to the Election Commission on any electoral irregularity observed by them. This is to minimize the chances of any incidence of unfair or corrupt electoral practice.

e) Security Deployment

Police will be placed on election security duty in every place wherever election works are carried out. This is to prevent any security related incidence from taking place.

f) Education and Information

Periodic trainings will be conducted to educate and inform the voters on the entire process of elections. This will prepare a voter to make the correct decision in choosing the most suitable political party and candidate.

g) Role of Media & Civil Society

The media will be expected to play a very important and a positive role. They must serve as the eyes and ears of the Election Commission. They should disseminate correct information about the background of the contesting candidates and try to reach that information to the voter so that the voter can choose the best candidate available. The civil society is also expected to play a similar role to that of the media in Bhutan.

8. What are the important elements to ensure free and fair elections?

Important elements to ensure free and fair elections are that there must be a clean and defect-free Voters List. There should be a level playing field for all political parties and candidates.

On the poll day election must take place in a totally neutral setting and atmosphere. Access to the polling station should be without any obstruction or intimidation so that a voter could vote on his free will.

A foolproof counting procedure is equally important to ensure fair elections.

The candidates, political parties and their polling representatives will be allowed to be present at every stage of elections. There will be total transparency of all events.

9. What is the responsibility of the Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) of Bhutan?

The CEC is the Chairperson of the Election Commission. He has to ensure that the elections are conducted properly. He represents the Commission in its dealing with the Government and the State in international relations on election matters.

10. What is the tenure of service of the CEC of Bhutan?

The tenure of service of the CEC is five years. He will vacate office either on completion of the tenure or on attaining the age of sixty-five whichever is earlier, if this takes place during his 5 year term.

ELECTIONS

11. What is an election?

An election is a process by which voters choose political parties or candidates as their representatives in Parliament or the Local Governments through the casting of votes.

12. What is a Primary Round?

A Primary Round is the election held to choose two political parties which win the highest and the second highest number of votes to contest the General Elections. In the Primary Round, all registered political parties are required to contest election in every Dzongkhag.

13. What is a General Election?

A General Election is the election where the two winning political parties in the Primary Round nominate candidates to contest for seats in the National Assembly. The political party that wins the most seats in the National Assembly will become the Ruling Party and the other will be the Opposition Party.

14. What is a National Referendum?

A National Referendum is a way of making a decision on an issue of national significance, directly by the people, through the casting of a “Yes” or “No” vote. Issues that should be decided by means of National Referendum are usually stated in the Constitution.

15. When are elections held?

Elections for the National Assembly and the Local Governments are held every five years or when terms of offices complete or when there is a premature dissolving of a house. Election for the National Council will be held only on completion of the term of office.

16. Who decides the dates of elections?

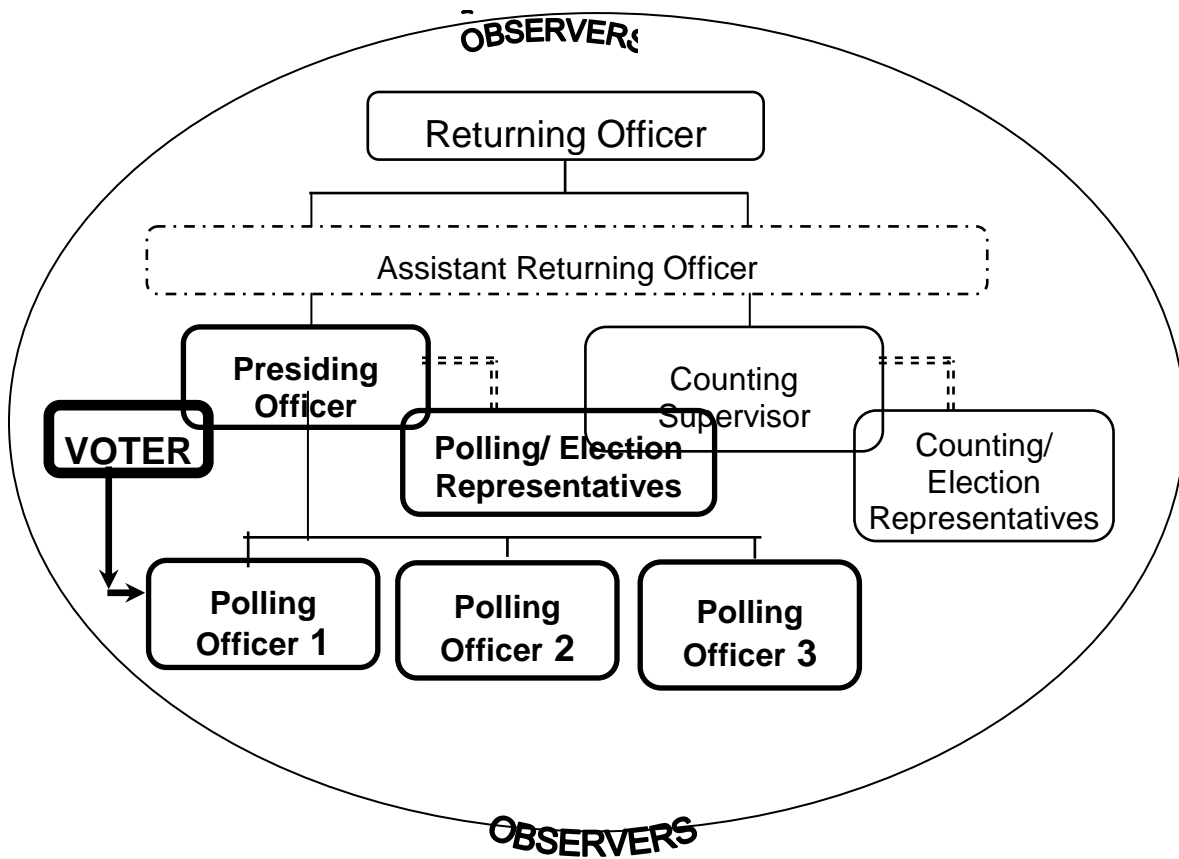
The Election Commission will announce the date of elections to Parliament. The Druk Gyalpo, through a Royal Decree, will issue a notification for commencement of an election. The Election Commission will announce the date of elections to the Local Governments. It will also issue the notification for commencement of the elections.

17. Why are elections important?

Elections are important because it is through elections people make their choice of governments and leaders. It is a once-in-five-year opportunity for a voter to elect qualified and capable politicians as their representatives in Parliament and Local Governments.

18. Who supervises the conduct of elections?

The Election Commission will appoint officers from the civil service as Returning Officers, Assistant Returning Officers, Presiding Officers and Counting Supervisors to supervise and conduct elections. Returning Officers and Assistant Returning Officers will supervise the overall conduct of elections in a constituency. The Presiding Officers assisted by Polling Officers will conduct polling. The Counting Supervisor will make sure that votes are counted properly and correctly. Observers will also be appointed. They will ensure that elections are clean, free, and fair. The illustration given below shows the election officials involved in an election.



19. What is a Bye-Election?

A Bye-Election is a special election held to fill a vacancy, in Parliament or Local Governments, when an elected member resigns, dies or becomes ineligible to continue office.

VOTING

20. What is voting?

Voting refers to the act of casting a vote in an election.

21. Why should one vote?

Every citizen must know that voting is a sacred and a valuable right. He must exercise his right according to his free will, without anybody's influence. He should make the best choice from amongst the candidates, so that ultimately the objective to have good governance in the country is realised, leading to the well-being of the people and peace and stability of the country. This is the responsibility of the voter.

A voter can through the right use of his vote ensure that opportunity is denied for role of money power and muscle power by political parties and candidates in the election process.

22. Who can vote?

A Bhutanese who has a Citizenship Identity Card, is over 18 years of age on the date of elections and enrolled in the Electoral Roll of a particular constituency can vote.

23. What is a constituency?

It is a pre-designated area from which candidates can contest an election. A candidate who wins the maximum number of votes cast by voters of that area gets elected as its representative.

24. Who cannot vote?

A person cannot vote if he is not a citizen of Bhutan, has not attained the minimum of 18 years of age at the time of casting the vote has been declared to be mentally unsound or specifically barred from voting under the laws of the country.

25. When to vote?

Voting is done on the dates announced by the Election Commission. A voter can get this information through radio, TV, newspapers, public notices and notification issued by the Election Commission as well as through the respective Dzongkhag and Gewog Administrations.

26. Where can one vote?

A voter can vote only at a notified polling station of a constituency where his *Mitsi* or *Gung* is registered for a period of more than one year and his name is enrolled in the Voters List.

27. How can one find out where to vote?

One can find out where to vote from the Voter Photo Identity Card (VPIC), Electoral Roll and Voters List.

28. Can a person vote in more than one place?

No. A voter cannot vote in more than one place or in more than one constituency for the same elections.

29. What will happen if one does not vote?

Voting in Bhutan is not compulsory. But it is the moral responsibility of every Bhutanese voter to exercise his right to vote. If he does not vote he could be guilty of letting a less competent political party or a candidate come to power.

30. What happens if one does not vote for the most suitable candidate?

If a voter does not vote for the most suitable candidate it may result in electing a wrong party or person who will come and stay in power for five years. This would mean the country having an inefficient and ineffective government. Such a government will not be able to take

good decisions which in the end will harm the interest of the people and the country.

31. What happens when the identity of a voter is challenged?

When the identity of a voter is challenged by a polling representative, the Presiding Officer will ask the challenger to prove his challenge and the voter to produce his Citizenship Identity Card. If the challenge is found to be baseless the voter will be allowed to vote. If the challenge is established, the voter will be handed over to the police.

32. Who is a polling representative?

A polling representative is a voter who represents a political party or a candidate and is permitted by the Election Commission to witness the conduct of polls.

33. What happens if a voter finds that someone else has already voted in his name?

If a voter is told by the First Polling Officer that a vote has already been cast in his name, he is required to inform the Presiding Officer immediately. The law allows such a voter to cast his vote on the Provisional Ballot Paper.

34. Whom can a voter approach if he has any problem?

If a voter finds that information in the Electoral Roll or VPIC is incorrect he should approach the Dzongkhag Electoral Officer. In case of problems during elections he can approach the Returning Officer of his Constituency, Presiding Officer at the Polling Booth or a National Observer appointed by the Election Commission.

35. What are the polling procedures?

After an election is announced, voters will be informed of the date and time of polling through wide publicity and official notices.

On the day of the polling a voter will go through the following steps:

Step 1: On entering a polling booth, a voter goes to the First Polling Officer to check his identity in the Voters List by producing the VPIC. The First Polling Officer shall then call out aloud his name and serial number so that polling representatives are made aware of the presence of the voter. At this stage, a polling representative may challenge the identity of a voter.

Step 2: If the identity of a voter is not challenged, he can proceed to the Second Polling Officer. The Second Polling Officer will record the serial number in the Register of Voters and then mark the left forefinger of the voter with indelible ink. The voter will sign or affix thumb impression in the Register. The Officer will then give the voter a signed voters slip.

Step 3: The voter will take the slip to the Third Polling Officer who files the slip and presses the “Ballot” button of the EVM while directing the voter to the Voting Compartment to cast his vote. A voter must keep in mind that he has to proceed to the Voting Compartment in exactly the same order as his serial number is recorded in the Register of Voters.

Step 4: Voting Procedure

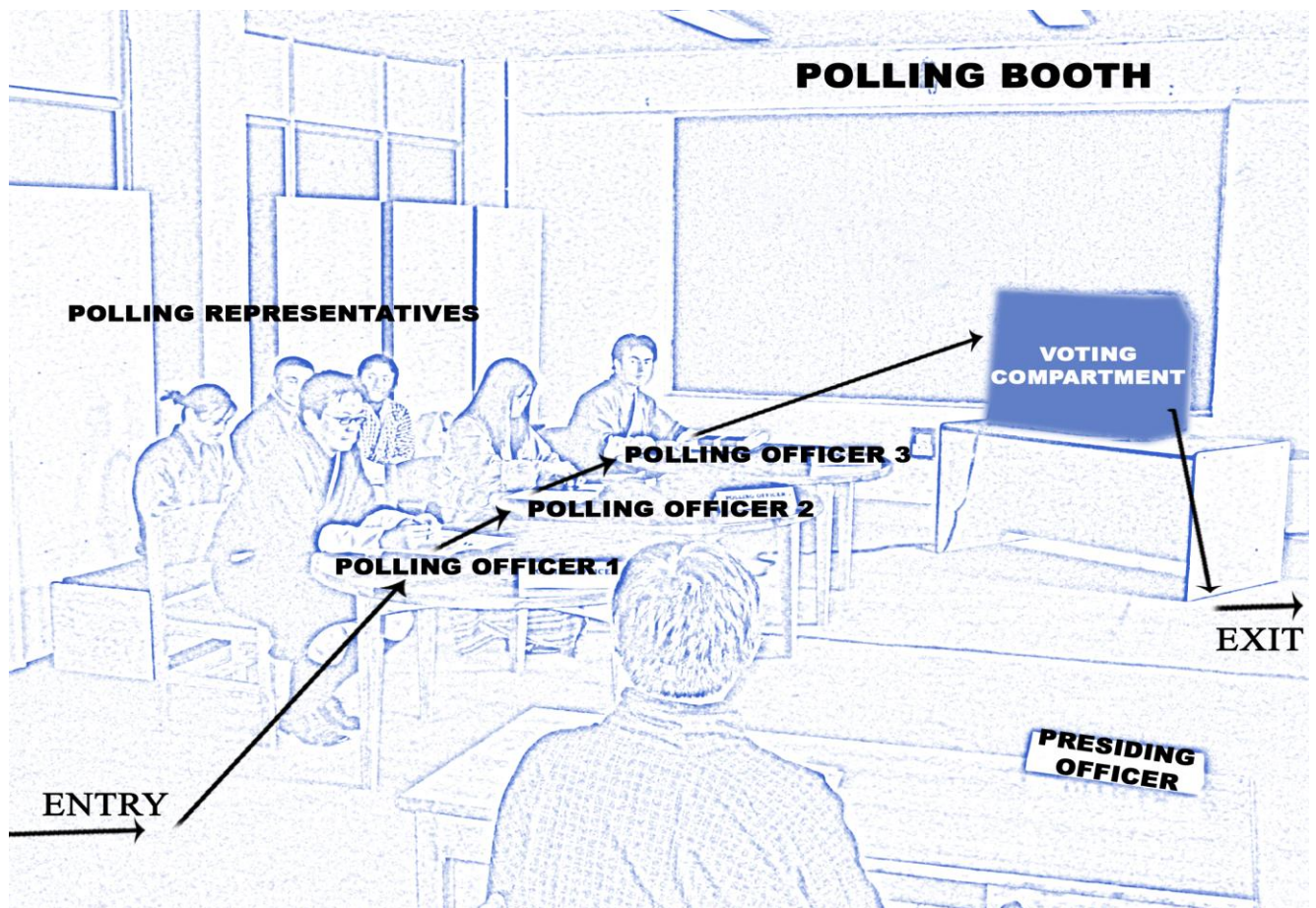
Inside the Voting Compartment a voter must press the Blue Button on the Balloting Unit of the Voting machine against the name and symbol of the candidate or political party of his choice. A voter may note that the EVM is programmed to register only one vote for each voter.

A voter should know that when a Blue Button of his choice is pressed, a Red Lamp will glow against the name and symbol of the candidate he has chosen.

At the same time a Beep can be heard by all, indicating that the voter in the Voting Compartment has cast his vote and it has been recorded. The busy lamp will go off in the Control Unit.

Since casting of a vote is important and secret no one will be allowed to take photograph or see a voter casting his vote.

Even the polling officials or representatives, under any pretext, may not enter the Voting Compartment while a voter is casting his vote. If a voter is physically challenged and requires help, he will be permitted to take a helper of his choice who is himself an eligible voter.



POSTAL BALLOT

36. What is a postal ballot?

A postal ballot is the system of casting a vote through post by a specific group of voters.

37. Is there a provision for voting through postal ballot in Bhutan?

Yes, there is provision for postal ballot under the Election Act of Bhutan.

38. Who are entitled to vote by post?

Voters who are on diplomatic assignments, working in Bhutanese Embassies, on special duty abroad, their spouses and dependents, civil servants, students and those serving in the armed forces, officials on election duty and voters specifically permitted by the Election Commission in consultation with the Government can vote through postal ballots.

39. How to apply for a postal ballot?

A postal voter shall make an application for a Postal Ballot in the prescribed form. The Form must be signed by the applicant in the presence of a competent witness. It should be delivered by hand, diplomatic pouches or by registered post. It must reach the Returning Officer of the constituency not later than by noon on the fifteenth day before the day of poll.

40. What will a Postal Voter do upon receiving the Ballot papers?

Once a Postal Voter receives the papers and before marking the Postal Ballot Paper, he should produce the ballot paper, the Identification Declaration Certificate (IDC) and the Envelope B before a competent witness. He shall first fill the IDC in the presence of the competent witness and then mark the Postal Ballot Paper to cast his vote. The Postal Voter shall, immediately upon completing the marking the

Postal Ballot Paper in total secrecy, place the same in Envelope B and effectively close it with a seal.

The sealed Envelope B together with the IDC shall be placed in Envelope A. The voter shall then dispatch Envelope A by registered post without delay, or hand it over to the Returning Officer.

41. Where can one get the Postal Ballot Application Form?

The Postal Ballot Paper will be made available at the employing offices. It can be obtained from the nearest offices of the Election Commission. It can also be downloaded from the website of the Election Commission of Bhutan.

42. Who is a competent witness?

Regardless of the relations, a competent witness is a Bhutanese citizen known to the Postal Voter and is an eligible voter registered in the same constituency except in the case of Postal Voters outside the Kingdom.

43. What are the duties of the competent witness?

The duties of a competent witness are to verify the identity of the applicant; witness the signing of the application and assure that the information and statements contained in the application are true. He has also to make sure that the voter marks the Postal Ballot Paper in total secrecy.

ELECTRONIC VOTING MACHINES (EVMs)

44. What is an Electronic Voting Machine (EVM)?

The EVM is a device used for casting, recording and counting votes. The Control Unit is used by the Third Polling Officer and the Ballot Unit by the voter for casting his vote.

45. How does it operate?

EVM looks and works like an adding machine. The Ballot Unit has a column of buttons running down one side. Next to each button the name and symbol of a candidate or party written on slips of paper can be placed. These can be rearranged. No one can rig the machines at the factory, since they wouldn't know which button would be assigned to which candidate. Also, the software is embedded onto a microprocessor that cannot be reprogrammed. If someone tries to pry open the machine, it automatically shuts down.

Voters cast their vote by pushing one of the buttons. A light glows red and a beep is emitted, indicating that a vote has been registered. Should trouble arise, an election official can push an override button that shuts down the system.

The machines are programmed to record only one vote every five seconds.

46. How safe is an election where an EVM is used?

An election where EVMs are used is much safer than where ballot boxes are used. It has many safety features.

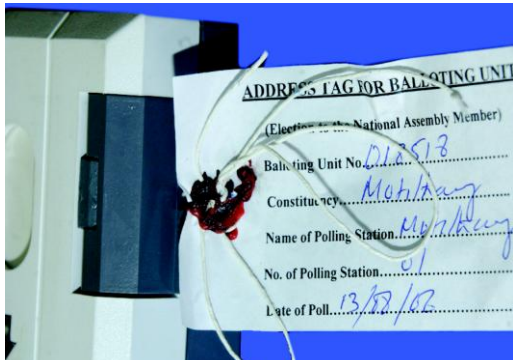
First of all a Returning Officer will allow any candidate or their authorized Representatives to inspect EVMs before an election.

Further, as can be seen from the pictures, at every stage and on different parts of the machine, the Election Officials and Polling Representatives will put their seals and signatures. The Control Unit has to be sealed at 5 places by different officials such as the Returning Officer, Presiding officers and Polling Officers jointly with

the Election and Polling Representatives. Likewise the Ballot Unit has to be sealed and signed at 3 places.

SEALING PROCESS

Sealing with address tags on bottom and top cover of the balloting unit



Address tags sealed on top and bottom covers



Sealing with address tag on the „CAND SET button inside cover



Sealing with address tag on the candidate set compartment cover



Sealed EVM Units



Sealing of carrying case after poll



Therefore, if any one tries to tamper with the machine all these seals and signature will have to be first tampered with. To get time to re-seal and forge different signature is going to be a very difficult task.

The machines will be transported to and from the polling stations only under police escort. The Polling Representatives are welcomed to accompany the machines. Once a machine is brought to the Polling Station it will be inspected to check for any instance of tampering or manipulation.

During the poll, the handling of machines by the election officials will always be in full view of everyone present at a Polling Station.

At the time of casting the vote, the machine is designed to allow a voter to cast only one vote. The BEEP sound that will be made by the machine will indicate that he has cast his vote. He cannot cast double vote as the machine will record the next vote only after a gap of 20 seconds and provided that the Polling Officer controlling the Control Unit agrees to release the Ballot Button for a second time for him. The Ballot Unit has a place for display of the Name of a Political Party or Candidate in Dzongkha and English, Election Symbol of a Party or Candidate and his photograph, so that no voter will make an error in casting his vote for the Party or the Candidate of his choice.

Most voters find pressing the button on an EVM is much easier and simpler than marking the ballot paper by pen and casting votes into a Ballot Box.

Finally at the close of polls, the machines will be jointly sealed. These are then taken under police escort with great care and precaution and stored with utmost safety in the Secured Store-Rooms.

On the day of the counting, before counting starts, the Election Officials and the Counting Representatives will inspect the seals and the machines for any signs of tampering and manipulation.

The machine is designed to allow reading of the result in a transparent manner to the satisfaction of all parties concerned. Every display of a result will be announced by the machine itself with a BEEP.

Since it is not going to be easy to cheat, an election using an EVM is very safe.

47. What is the advantage of using an EVM?

Use of an EVM modernizes the election process. It is portable and simple to use and can be installed in a short time. There is no scope for invalid votes. It is foolproof and counting will be faster. At the same time it is practical and convenient to carry. The logistics and transportation costs reduce significantly.

VOTER PHOTO IDENTITY CARD (VPIC)

48. What is a Voter Photo Identity Card (VPIC)?

A VPIC is an identity card issued to a voter by the Election Commission containing his Citizenship Identity Card number, name, sex, date of birth and details of the polling station. It will be required to prove the identity of a voter at a polling station.

49. How can a voter get a VPIC?

A voter can get a VPIC after the Electoral Roll of a constituency is finalised by the concerned Dzongkhag Electoral Registration Officer.

50. Will possession of VPIC alone entitle one to vote?

Possession of VPIC alone is not sufficient. To vote, a voter must also ensure that his name is reflected in the Voters List of his polling station.

51. What precaution should a voter take on the day of polling?

A voter should be aware that committing any of the following offences will be prosecuted under law:

- (i) Offering or accepting money or any other gratification either to vote for or not to vote for a particular political party or candidate;
- (ii) Inducing by way of liquor, feast, gifts, etc. to vote for or not to vote for a particular political party or candidate;
- (iii) Inducing to vote or not to vote for a particular political party or candidate on the grounds of religion, caste, community, beliefs or place of birth;
- (iv) Threatening of a voter; and

- (v) Arranging transport for the voters by political parties and candidates or arrangements made on their behalf for traveling to or from any polling station.

OBSERVERS

52. Who is a National Observer?

A National Observer is a senior public official appointed by the Election Commission to monitor and report on the preparation and conduct of elections in a free and fair manner.

53. What are the functions of Observers?

Observers will be responsible to monitor and report to the Election Commission on any irregularities in the conduct of elections. They ensure that the political parties, candidates and election officials follow the election laws and guidelines. Observers also monitor and evaluate the election expenses of political parties and candidates. In short, Observers are the eyes and ears of the Election Commission during the election period.

54. Who is an International Observer?

An International Observer is an expatriate who is invited to observe Parliamentary elections and National Referendums from the UNO, SAARC, other recognized international and regional organizations and their agencies and foreign governments with which Bhutan enjoy diplomatic relations.

ELECTORAL ROLL

55. What is an Electoral Roll?

An Electoral Roll is a list of eligible voters who can vote in an election. It is divided into Voters List for specific constituencies and polling stations clearly specifying the area from where a voter can cast his votes.

56. Who can register in the Electoral Roll?

A Bhutanese who has a Citizenship Identity Card, is over 18 years of age on the cut off date fixed by the Election Commission and enrolled in the electoral roll of a particular constituency can register.

57. How to register in the Electoral Roll?

A voter registration form is easily available in the office of the Electoral Registration Officer in the Dzongkhag or the Election Commission Headquarters or can be downloaded from the ECB Website. A voter can submit a completed form as per the direction contained in the form. The name of applicant after verification of his application against the civil registry will be added to the Electoral Roll.

58. Why should a voter register in the Electoral Roll?

A voter should register in the Electoral Roll as he can exercise his right to vote only if his name is found in the Voters List at the polling station on the day of polling.

59. Should a voter inform the electoral authorities of change in constituency?

Change in constituency need not be communicated to the electoral authorities if the voter intends to vote from the previous place of registration. However, if the voter intends to vote from the new place he should apply for changes to be made in his *Mitsi* or *Gung* registration. The change permitted by the Department of Civil

Registration and Census must then be communicated to the electoral authorities.

60. Who can access the Electoral Roll?

Any person can access the Electoral Roll as it will be displayed in designated public areas, office of the Registration Officer and the Election Commission website. A copy of the Electoral Roll will also be given to all the registered political parties and candidates.

61. How can one check whether one's name is included in the Electoral Roll?

The Election Commission will publish the Electoral Roll from time to time. The Roll will be available for inspection at the office of the Electoral Registration Officer, designated public places and the Election Commission website. Voters can also write to the Election Commission to confirm inclusion of their names.

62. When are deletions of entries in the Electoral Roll made?

Deletion from the Electoral Roll is made when a voter expires, becomes legally disqualified from voting or when there is double entry of the name of a voter.

Deletions will also be made when a voter changes constituency. In this case, it will be immediately included in the Voters List of the new constituency.

POLITICAL PARTIES

63. What is a political party?

A political party is a group of individual citizens of Bhutan registered with the Election Commission of Bhutan, as per the provisions of the Constitution and the Election Act with the intention of contesting elections to the National Assembly.

64. Who can become a member of a Political Party?

Any Bhutanese can become a member of a political party if he is not a member of the Royal Family, a Trulku, a Lam or other religious personality, currently employed in the civil service or the armed forces, or has been disqualified as a voter under the provisions of the Election Act and the Constitution.

65. Why do political parties and candidates conduct election campaigns?

Political parties and candidates conduct election campaigns for three reasons. One, through election campaigns they can reach out to as many voters in person. Second, they can explain their party manifesto, objectives, policies and plans and how these would benefit the voters and the country. Third, they get the chance to explain why a voter should vote for their party and candidate in an election and not the others.

They may also conduct rallies and/or meetings to address the voters in public. They can also use the media to carry their campaign messages and slogans.

66. What is the duration of an election campaign?

The election campaign period commences from the date of announcement of election by the Election Commission and ends 48 hours before the date of poll.

For more information & any clarification please feel free to contact or write to:

**The Chief Election Commissioner of Bhutan,
Election Commission of Bhutan,
Post Box No: 2008,
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